

**ST. MARY’S COUNTY
AGRICULTURE, SEAFOOD & FORESTRY BOARD
2019 ANNUAL REPORT**

INTRODUCTION: PURPOSE OF THE GROUP

The St. Mary’s County Agricultural, Seafood and Forestry Board members shall be appointed by the Commissioners for St. Mary’s County, to meet statutory requirements, include:

- at least three (3) members from the agricultural community (owner-operators of commercial farms who earn fifty (50) percent or more of their income from farming);
- at least one (1) member from the forestry community;
- at least one (1) member from the real estate community;
- at least one (1) member from the community not actively engaged in agriculture.

Each member of the Board shall be appointed for a term of office of five years with no member serving for more than two consecutive full terms. Members of the St. Mary's County Agricultural, Seafood and Forestry Board during 2019 are as follows:

<u>Member</u>	<u>Position</u>	<u>Expiration Date</u>
Stephen Reeves	Chairman, farmer	12/31/2020
Scott Bacon	Vice Chairman, forestry	12/31/2020
Colleen Corrigan	citizen member	12/31/2019*
Phil Dorsey	real estate	12/31/2019*
Lynn Klug	farmer	12/31/2023
Phil Langley	waterman	12/31/2020
Charles Mattingly	member	12/31/2023
John K. Parlett, Jr.	real estate	12/31/2019
Alan Polk	forestry	12/31/2019*
Patrick Russell	farmer	6/30/2024
Michael Sirk	forestry	6/30/2021
Joseph Wood	farmer	6/30/2021

* eligible to be reappointed for another term

The following shall be ex-officio members:

- one (1) member from the University of Maryland Extension – St. Mary’s County;
- one (1) member from the St. Mary’s Soil Conservation District; and

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SIGNIFICANT ACTIVITIES FOR THE PAST YEAR

Agriculture, Seafood, and Forestry Board:

- Over the past year, the Board has strongly advocated to relocate the North St. Mary's County Farmer's Market from the Charlotte Hall Library to a new location. A site was purchased in December 2017. The Board has worked with staff to review proposed site plans for this project.
- The Board has worked with the Southern Maryland Resource Conservation and Development (RC&D) and the Patuxent Tidewater Land Trust (PTLT) to ensure the success of the Rural Legacy Program in St. Mary's County. At the request of the Maryland Department of Natural Resources, RC&D is now the land trust representing the Mattapan Rural Legacy Area and PTLT represents the Huntersville Rural Legacy Area.
- The Board is pleased to have submitted 12 applications to the Maryland Agriculture Land Preservation Foundation (MALPF) for consideration of easement purchase for the FY2020 funding cycle. 19 applications were reviewed overall.

Subcommittees

Agriculture Land Preservation Advisory Board

The duties of the Agricultural Land Preservation Advisory Board are:

- (1) To advise the county governing body with respect to the establishment of agricultural districts and the approval of purchases of easements by MALPF within the county;
 - (2) To assist the county governing body in reviewing the status of agricultural districts and land under easement;
 - (3) To advise MALPF concerning county priorities for agricultural preservation;
 - (4) To approve or disapprove an application by the county for certification;
 - (5) To promote preservation of agriculture within the county by offering information and assistance to farmers with respect to establishment of districts and purchase of easements;
 - (6) To meet at least annually with forest conservation district boards in order to work cooperatively to encourage the promotion and retention of farmland and woodland in their respective jurisdictions; and
 - (7) To perform any other duties as assigned by the county governing body.
- The Agriculture Land Preservation Advisory Board approved Lot Requests on 5 easement properties and a request to allow an Agricultural Subdivision on an easement property. All these requests were forwarded to the State MALPF Board for consideration.

Program	Acres Preserved in 2019	Total Acres Preserved
MALPF	56.96	12,378.07
Rural Legacy	1,140.55	6,130.32
TDRs	97.39	4,313.32
Total	1,294.90	22,821.71

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Farmers Market

The Duties of the Farmers Market Subcommittee is to address issues facing farmers markets administered throughout the County

- The Home Grown Farm Market is located at 21078 Three Notch Road in Lexington Park. The Home Grown Farm Market was open Saturdays March 30 through December 21 from 9 am until 1 pm and on Wednesdays from June 19 through August 28 from 10 am to 2 pm. The Home Grown Farm Market had thirty (30) vendors in 2018.
- The California Farmers Market is located at the BAE Systems parking lot at the corner of Town Creek Drive and Route 235. The California Farmers Market was open Saturday between 9 am and 1 pm April 20 through November 23. The California Farmers Market had fourteen (14) vendors in 2019.
- The North St. Mary's County Farmers Market is located at the Charlotte Hall Library Parking Lot. The North St. Mary's County Farmers Market was open Monday through Saturday April through November. The North St. Mary's County Farmers Market had nineteen (19) vendors in 2019.

Agriculture Reconciliation Committee

The Agricultural Reconciliation Committee arbitrates and mediates disputes involving agricultural operations conducted on agricultural lands. The Committee issues opinions on whether such operations conform with generally accepted agricultural management practices.

- No activity for this committee was required in 2018.

PROBLEMS AND CHALLENGES

- Attendance. Member attendance at Board meetings continues to be an issue.
- St Mary's County Farmer's Market. The Board would like to see a general form of governing over all farmers markets in the County.
- Farmland Conservation Easements. Year after year there is interest to participate in the MALPF program from landowners however there is a shortfall of funding for the program.
 - The Agriculture Land Preservation Advisory Board continues to be concerned over the quality of appraisals used to determine easement values for the Maryland Agriculture Land Preservation Foundation easement offers. The appraisers used by the State are not familiar with our area, have unrealistic values of properties in our County and the two appraisers had widely varying assessments of the properties.

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PLANS FOR THE CURRENT YEAR

- The Board will continue to meet on a monthly basis the second Thursday of each month
2020 Meeting Calendar

January 9, 2020	July 9, 2020
February 13, 2020	August 13, 2020
March 12, 2020	September 10, 2020
April 9, 2020	October 8, 2020
May 14, 2020	November 12, 2020
June 11, 2020	December 10, 2020

Commissioner and citizen attendance is always welcomed.

ONGOING ACTIVITIES

- The Board will continue to promote and discuss initiatives, projects and programs as they relate to the St. Mary’s County Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy